

Overview of the Generations

From **Generations at Work** by Ron Zemke, Claire Raines, and Bob Filipczak

Veterans: Birth Years 1922-1943, Age 61 and Over in 2004

- Were born before and during two of the defining events of the century: the Great Depression and World War II.
- Are the generation whose vision and hard work created the United States as we know it today. They are the classic “keepers of the grail,” an irreplaceable repository of lore and wisdom.
- Grew up in difficult times. Many of their parents lost their jobs during the Great Depression, and the entire family experienced hardships.
- Worked on teams under strong leaders who told them exactly what to do, how, and when. They learned to conform to the needs of large efforts as soldiers, citizens, and factory workers.
- Don’t take jobs for granted – are grateful for them and view a job as something to have over the long haul.
- Are solid, no-nonsense performers with respect for authority.

Baby Boomers: Birth Years 1943-1960, Age 44-61 in 2004

- Were cherished by parents who had sacrificed and fought a war for the right to bear them, raise them, and indulge them. Most lived in families with a working dad and stay-at-home mom.
- Have popularized every phase of life as they have passed through it.
- Will always have the shadow of Vietnam and how it was viewed by whom looming over them.
- Are tireless movers and shakers devoted to the corporate mission who have tended to define themselves through their jobs and achieve their identity by the work they perform.
- Are the most important segment of the labor force and will remain so for the next 20 years.
- Tend to have a poor savings record, so few can retire or think about early retirement.

Generation Xers: Birth Years 1960-1980, Age 24-44 in 2004

- Grew up while America seemed to fail militarily, politically, diplomatically, and economically.
- Are the product of latchkey parenting and unprecedented divorce rates and the first generation predicted to earn less than their parents did.
- Are comfortable with change – have changed cities, homes, and parents all their lives.
- Need feedback and flexibility and dislike close supervision.
- Move from job to job managing their own careers – learned early on they had to take care of themselves.
- Value balance in their lives – they work to live, not live to work.

Nexters: Birth Years 1980-2000, Age 24 and Under in 2004

- Are the busiest kids of all time who are the coddled and confident offspring of the most age-diverse group of parents ever. At least 2/3 of their parents planned to have them.
- Know the world is a dangerous place and they have to be careful – violence is all around them.
- Combine the teamwork ethic of the Boomers with the can-do attitude of the Veterans, and the technological savvy of the Xers.
- Are willing to work and learn and have greater exposure to and acceptance of multiculturalism.
- See the world as global, connected, and round the clock.